

## Update on TOPS-Related Legislation

*As of May 3, 2016*

**SB 174 by Senator Jack Donahue** - Approved by Senate, Approved by House, Awaiting Governor's Signature

- This bill sets future TOPS award amounts at the 2016-17 award amount level, thus, decoupling TOPS award increases from Tuition increases. Requires legislative approval for any future changes in TOPS award amounts.
- **SB 79 by Senator Dan Morrish** – Essentially the same as SB 174 has passed the Senate and is assigned to House Education Committee

**SB 470 by Senator Dan W. Morrish** – Approved by Senate, Assigned to House Education Committee

- This bill would change the manner in which TOPS awards are distributed in the event of a budget shortage. It would change the current method of reducing the number of recipients based on ACT score and family ability to pay, to a pro-rata share of available funds being paid to all eligible recipients, subject to approval by the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget (JLCB).
- Amended on Senate floor to allow students to opt out of accepting a reduced award or enrolling for a term in which the award is reduced and maintain their TOPS eligibility without penalty. Sets a 5 year limit on exhausting their remaining TOPS eligibility unless granted an exception.
- **HB 1050 by Representative Nancy Landry** – Essentially the same as SB 470 will be considered, with amendments, by the House Education Committee at 9:00 a.m. Wednesday, May 4, in House Committee Room 1.

**SB 329 by Senator Dan Claitor** – Approved by Senate, Assigned to House Education Committee

- Increases the minimum cumulative grade point average for the Opportunity Award, the Performance Award, and the Honors Award in four years. Bill raises GPA for Opportunity Award from 2.5 to 2.75, Performance Award from 3.0 to 3.25, and Honors Award from 3.0 to 3.5 for 2021 high school graduates and later.
- Amended in Senate Education Committee to leave Opportunity Award GPA at 2.5.

**HB 438 by Representative Barry Ivey** – Reported favorably by House Education, Awaiting House Floor Consideration

- Creates a new Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award, the TOPS-Tech Transfer Award. The legislation 1) increases the initial eligibility requirements for the Opportunity Award from a GPA of 2.5 to 3.0 and minimum ACT score from 20 to 21, 2) sets initial eligibility for the TOPS-Tech Transfer Award at a GPA of 2.5 and ACT score of 20, and 3) raises Opportunity Award GPA requirement from 2.3 to 2.5 after completion of 24 hours of credit and 2.5 to 2.75 for 48 hours of credit. The TOPS-Tech Transfer Award is for two years at the TOPS Tech level, and 4 semesters at the Opportunity Award level if the student has a 2.75 GPA at the time of transfer.

To watch live streaming video of the legislative process as these bills are considered, go to <http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/home.aspx> and click on the appropriate body (for House or

Senate Floor actions) or the assigned House or Senate committee at the time indicated and follow the instructions.